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Mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety are common and impact everyday life in challenging and often debilitating ways. One out of every four Hoosiers has been diagnosed with depression or anxiety and many more go undiagnosed because they do not seek help. With unknown numbers who do not seek care; it is up to all of us to increase our understanding of the signs and symptoms of mental illness. Most importantly, we must understand that most depression and anxiety disorders are treatable! Without treatment, lives are disrupted and unnecessary suffering results. Using our influence, we must step in and help those we love get the care they need as well as learn to ask for help when we need it ourselves.

Learn the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Depression is more than being down or experiencing a blue mood for a few days. It is feeling “sad” or “empty” for weeks at a time. These persistent symptoms often disrupt work and family life. Sometimes, side-effects from medications can cause depression. Often, depression co-occurs with other serious illnesses such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Don’t ignore the symptoms or think that these prolonged depressed feelings are part of your illness; they aren’t! Make sure you discuss these symptoms with your doctor.

Symptoms of anxiety disorders are bound together by the common threads of excessive, irrational fear and dread. But each anxiety disorder has its own distinct features. Trying to handle an anxiety disorder alone can make everyday life miserable. Once you recognize these symptoms, talk with your doctor right away.

Depression Signs & Symptoms

Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood

Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism

Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness

Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex

Decreased energy, fatigue, being “slowed down”

Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions

When to get help...

You experience four or more symptoms everyday for more than two weeks

Symptoms cause impairment—disrupt school, work or family life

You think that one of your current medications may be making you feel depressed

A few Signs & Symptoms of Anxiety:

Constant exaggerated worry

Fatigue, trembling, muscle tension, headache or nausea

Panic Disorder – episodes of intense fear; shortness of breath; abdominal distress

Social Phobia – Overwhelming anxiety and excessive self-consciousness in everyday social situations

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317.356.7190 ext. 253

□ **Laboratories**
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The Indiana State Department of Health supports Indiana's economic prosperity and quality of life by promoting, protecting and providing for the health of Hoosiers in their communities.

Seek help for your mental health or for someone you care about

If you have been experiencing any of the symptoms of depression nearly every day for two weeks or your anxiety is impacting your ability to function normally, seek help immediately. You may not recognize what is happening to you or you may be reluctant to take the first step to get the help you need. Your health care provider can determine what your needs are based on your symptoms and identify the best treatment for you. In addition to your doctor, mental health professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologist, and licensed counselors can provide the care you need.

If someone you care about is experiencing these symptoms, tell them you are concerned and share this information with them. Don't just talk with them about seeing a doctor, help them make an appointment and take them to the office. Most importantly, be there for the person after he or she starts treatment.

Know that mental health disorders are treatable and that you don't have to suffer

There are a variety of treatments including medication and psychotherapy that prove to be very effective for depression and anxiety. Take your treatment plan seriously; it will allow you to put one foot in front of the other so you can continue on the road to recovery. If you are prescribed medicine, take it as your doctor advises – even when you begin to feel better. With treatment, your mental and physical health will improve!